

# Suffolk District Medical Society

## MONUMENT TO JENNER.

### CONSIDERATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS IN ITS FAVOR.

It has recently been proposed to erect, in London, a bronze monument to Dr. JENNER, the great discoverer of vaccination. In the latter part of the last century it was found that forty thousand persons died annually of the small-pox, in Great Britain and Ireland. This was true at the time when small-pox inoculation was very generally practised, and when the treatment of those under it had been carried to the greatest degree of perfection. Of those who had the small-pox in the natural way, one in six died, under the best care; of those who were inoculated, one in two hundred. Inoculation was a great blessing to those who were the subjects of it, but not to the whole community. While the thoughtful and prudent enjoyed the benefit of this practice, they spread the disease through the land; for many of those who were not protected, were infected by those under inoculation; so that, on the whole, it was found that the deaths from small-pox were actually increased by the practice of inoculation.

How hopeless seemed the case. The small-pox seemed to be an evil, which, in those latter days, men were born to encounter, and which must be submitted to. And how hideous, how horrid was the disease! Among us its sufferings are unknown, and when described they seem to many to be almost fabulous. The sufferings were not limited to the proper disease. Under the name of sequelæ,—of the consequences of small-pox,—they were renewed and prolonged in various shapes, and in many instances they marred the comfort of all the residue of life.

It was at the period above-mentioned, just at the close of the last century, that Dr. JENNER proposed a remedy for these great evils. He made public that the vaccine disease would prevent the occurrence of the small-pox; and that this disease might be produced artificially,—by inoculation,—with entire safety. It was soon known throughout the civilized world that this vaccine disease could be propagated with great ease; that it was so mild as not to interfere with the common occupations of life; that it might be communicated with safety to new-born infants, and to persons in the most delicate health, and that life was not endangered by it. It became obvious that, if vaccination could be made universal, the small-pox might, in time, die out for want of subjects. It was not found, indeed, that the security from small-pox after vaccination was perfect. But this was not a serious objection, for the same was true in respect to those, who had undergone the small-pox itself, either by inoculation, or in the natural way.

Dr. JENNER, then, put it in the power of the English people to save the lives of forty thousand persons in a year; a number to be increased annually by the increase of the population. Can it be a question whether such a benefactor should be remunerated and honored in the most ample manner?

Such are the views to be taken of the case as regards Englishmen. But is it from them alone that gratitude is due to the memory of JENNER? Were the benefits of his labors and of his discovery limited to them? Far from it. They were for all nations and for all times. And they were designed to be so. Such a discovery could

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not have been kept secret. Far from wishing to keep it a secret for a moment, JENNER and his countrymen hastened to extend the advantages of it to us, and to the whole world. These advantages have been enjoyed by us for half a century ; and the great mass of the people of this country are, at this day, and all might be, secured by vaccination from the loathsome small-pox. If there be any who cannot think of the splendor of the sun without remembering that this bright luminary has dark spots on its surface, these may object that the security from vaccination is not perfect. Let it be, they say, that formerly one million of persons, in Great Britain and Ireland, underwent the small-pox annually ; there are now one hundred thousand who suffer that disease every year, and of these, perhaps five thousand have been previously vaccinated. And, again, there are still noticed, in those islands, four or five thousand deaths from this disease, some of which, possibly some hundreds, are among those who have undergone vaccination.

If we were engaged in an inquiry for scientific purposes, we would ascertain what numbers can be adduced on the unfavorable side of the account. As it is, we have put into the mouth of the opponent estimates only, designing to take numbers sufficiently large. In reply to the objections above stated, we ask, — Would it be well for an Englishman to say that Dr. JENNER did not succeed in his attempt to be useful ; that while he tried to save the lives of forty thousand of his countrymen every year, in all coming time, he had not as yet succeeded in saving more than thirty-five thousand ? Especially should all of us scout such an objection, when the failure complained of might be almost entirely prevented, perhaps quite, if we, of this generation, would duly avail ourselves of the instructions which JENNER gave us.

Let us then unite, as one man, to show our gratitude to JENNER, the instrument of a blessed Providence, for the great benefits we have derived from his wise and philanthropic labors. Let all, whose pecuniary circumstances are easy, unite in the small contributions, which, in the aggregate, shall furnish some exhibition of a nation's gratitude.

It will occur to every one that while the whole world have been benefited by vaccination, the advantages must be more fully realized and appreciated by medical men than by others. On this account the following excellent Report is annexed, as a most important part of this paper.

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## J E N N E R   S T A T U E .

**Report made to the Suffolk District Medical Society, August 23, 1851.**

The Committee appointed by the Suffolk District Medical Society to consider what measures, if any, should be taken in relation to a *Bronze Statue of Dr. Jenner*, which it is proposed to erect in the city of London, ask leave to Report, that they cordially approve the object, as one which is entitled to the favorable consideration, not only of every member of the medical profession, but of every member of the human family ;

that the discovery that has immortalized his name, has done more than any other to lessen human suffering, and prolong human life; that it was not the result of accident, but was arrived at after long, patient, and scientific research; and thus, while it gave a renown to him, which it has been the fortune of no other man to obtain, it has conferred an unfading honor on the profession of which he was a distinguished member.

The Committee therefore feel that there should be some memorial of this illustrious man, as durable, were it possible, as the benefits he has conferred on his race; and that individuals of all nations, and of every calling in life, should be allowed to contribute to it. They are glad that measures are in progress to carry into effect to some extent, if not as far as practicable, this desirable object, and they recommend to the Society to adopt some means in aid of its execution.

They do not feel called upon to point out the precise mode in which this should be attempted. At the same time they would take the liberty of suggesting that the individuals, JAMES JACKSON, M. D., and JOHN WARE, M. D., who have brought this subject before the Society, and who were appointed in London members of the General Committee, should be requested to suggest such a plan as they may think proper, and to act as a Committee in behalf of this Society, in relation to the business.

Which is respectfully submitted by

GEORGE HAYWARD,  
CHARLES E. WARE,  
SAMUEL CABOT, JUN.,  
J. V. C. SMITH,  
NATHANIEL B. SHURTLEFF,

*Committee.*

*Voted,* To accept the Report and adopt the recommendation of the Committee.

*Boston, August 23, 1851.*

A true copy, attest,

JAMES W. STONE,

*Secretary pro. tem.*

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At as early a period as may be, subscriptions will be called for, that such as think proper may give their aid to the project above described.

No subscription will be received of more than one dollar from any individual.

*BOSTON, September 1, 1851.*

